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policies that are based on the man as breadwinner and do not take into consideration the relationship between paid and unpaid work.

6. Violence against women remains a key concern for all countries in the UNECE region as they face widespread domestic violence and more trafficking in women. In many countries women's participation in the decision-making process, especially at national levels, remains an important area for further action.

7. The 10-year review takes place against a background of continued political instability in a number of new democracies within the UNECE region, conflicts and post-conflict situations, massive migratory movements among and within countries, and the growing threat of terrorism. It also takes place in a new geopolitical situation reflecting the EU expansion to include 10 new member countries. This creates new opportunities, but also raises concerns about the potential marginalization of a significant number of non-EU member countries within a wider Europe.

8. As shown in their summary responses, most countries have a particular interest in: women and the economy (employability, including women's self-employment, social protection, gender budgets, gender statistics); strengthening of national machineries; and violence and trafficking. The secretariat has prepared notes with more in-depth discussions on these subjects and reference is made to them throughout this report.

9. The present review underscores the need to take the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action forward. It outlines both the achievements and the challenges in the 12 critical areas of concern, and points out areas for further action identified by the UNECE countries.

I. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

A. Women and poverty

- *Achievements: Many countries reported some decrease in the number of men and women living in*
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higher risk of poverty and social exclusion also in North America and Western Europe. In the United States, 90 per cent of adults who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (welfare) are women. In France, women account for 80 per cent of those earning less than the minimum wage.

13. Many countries, such as Azerbaijan, Denmark, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and the United Kingdom, have adopted measures to combat poverty among women. National plans for poverty reduction include financial support for families with children, single mothers and single retired women. In Kazakhstan, a special programme was established to improve nutrition for low-income mothers and children. Increasingly, countries also are tackling female poverty through active labour market policies and support to self-employment. The latter includes micro-credit schemes, such as in Bulgaria and Slovakia. National plans to combat poverty often take a comprehensive approach, encompassing measures related to income, employment, education and training, health and housing, childcare, single parents and single older people.

14. Measures to reduce women's poverty also recognize the link between the economic well-being of children and that of women. Child poverty, especially in large families, is high in a number of countries. Tax credits (see box) and strategies to give all children a head start have been used to ease the problem, sometimes as part of a wider programme of action for single parents and initiatives to prevent

Initiative targets women returning to the workforce, offering personalized support and skills training.

The Swiss federal parliament in 1997 and 1999 voted a special appropriation to expand the number of apprenticeships, with the express objective of promoting gender equality. Those funds led to regional projects targeted at young women with lower education levels and at the integration of immigrant women.

*The Ministry of Education in **Turkey***

25. Most countries made progress in sexual education, family planning and reproductive health through special programmes and, in some countries, legislative changes. However, early pregnancies, family

At Switzerland's initiative, 20 female ministers of foreign affairs and female government representatives met in Geneva to discuss a common action plan for combating violence against women more effectively and a joint declaration was adopted (15 March 2004).

In Turkey, fighting violence against women includes training security forces, health care personnel and other public servants who deal with the victims and educating women and girls about their legal rights. The Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems cooperates with civil society organizations.

E. Women and armed conflict

- ***Achievements:** Governments have recognized the violation of the human rights of women in armed conflict. There is increased awareness of the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, peace-building and in post-conflict situations. A number of countries increased their quotas for women in peacemaking organizations. Most countries are working to improve legislation on this issue.*
- ***Challenges:** Improving international cooperation on women and armed conflict. Acknowledging and giving more attention to all forms of violence, related to conflict situations, such as forced migration, trafficking, sexual exploitation, prostitution, physical and mental abuse.*

34. Most countries showed a general understanding of the problem and a number were committed to involving women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace negotiation. Concrete policy measures and actions are, however, less common.

35. Several countries acknowledge women's role in peace-building and reconciliation. Finland's Ministry of Defence developed a code of conduct for peacekeeping missions and included gender issues in the training of peacekeeping personnel. Ireland's Government is committed to equal opportunities for men and women in the Defence Forces and to participation of women in all aspects of Defence Forces activities. The United Kingdom is looking at ways of ensuring that it nominates women for missions and posts in the United Nations and other international organizations. Similar measures were taken by Switzerland.

36. Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan launched new initiatives against trafficking and to improve women's situation in conflict and post-conflict situations.

37. Yet, further action is needed to assist women and girls affected by armed conflicts to regain their political, social, economic and legal status and ensure that they have inheritance rights. It is also necessary to allow women to contribute actively to conflict resolution rather than perceiving them as passive victims.

In Sweden, all troops undergo special mission-specific training on gender issues before they are sent abroad on United Nations peacekeeping missions. In 1999, Sweden adopted a Strategy on Conflict Management and Peace-building. This includes training of personnel and support to voluntary organizations that work to strengthen implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

F. Women and the economy

- ***Achievements:** Many countries introduced measures and developed new tools to improve women's employability, particularly in relation to the European Employment Strategy. Measures included active labour market policies, investment in better education, the introduction of flexible working patterns,*

learning. Removing disadvantages of part-time employment. Promoting shared parental leave and providing more affordable childcare.

38. All responding countries viewed the economic aspects of gender as a priority. Women's position in the economy improved in most countries in North America and in Western Europe as a result of a better legislative framework, for instance in relation to the European Employment Strategy, and the introduction of new policies and measures, especially to improve employability and help women combine work with family responsibilities. This was reflected in higher participation rates, higher overall employment and some movement towards higher levels of responsibility and pay (see ECE/AC.28/2004/5).

39. More women became entrepreneurs and measures supporting women's self-employment were effectively used to support women's employability, especially in North America but also in many countries in Western Europe and in Eastern Europe and CIS (see ECE/AC.28/2004/CRP.2).

40. Nevertheless, the situation in Eastern Europe and CIS illustrates the fragility of women's economic position in times of crisis. Women's employment opportunities declined drastically: women's jobs suffered disproportional cuts, especially until the late 1990s, and women enjoyed fewer opportunities in the private sector, partly because of discriminatory practices. Women's presence in lower-paid sectors, such as public health and education, increased, as did their presence in low-paid jobs with few or no social benefits such as part-time or other non-standard employment arrangements and jobs in the informal sector. These tend to be jobs for which women are overqualified. The resurgence of traditional attitudes reinforces the perception of women as second-class employees (see ECE/AC.28/2004/6).

41. Despite the uneven progress, countries expressed concern over discrimination against women in the labour market. They also underlined the need to facilitate equal access to resources, rights and goods to help reduce poverty among women and further increase female participation in the economy.

42. All countries recognized the existence of a gender pay gap – in the United Kingdom it is 18 per cent, in Latvia over 20 per cent. In response, governments enacted laws making it easier for women to challenge unequal pay and funded voluntary pay reviews. Some governments introduced tax credits to help reduce the pay gap. Several set up equal treatment commissions with authority to investigate individual employers. Belgium launched a project (EVA), which aims to equip workers and employees with the tools for introducing new functional job classification and to encourage the revisions in order to make work classification system gender neutral.

43. Despite progress in helping women reconcile work and family responsibilities in Western Europe, e.g. in the Netherlands and France, the reduction in State benefits and the expansion of private health care, education or pensions, as part of the welfare reforms, remained a concern. These cuts in social protection schemes affected women disproportionately, because they strengthen the penalizing effect of unpaid care work. Although these changes were the most significant in Eastern Europe and CIS, their gender implications are of concern to all countries, as gender equality has been only a marginal issue in the social reforms throughout the UNECE region (see ECE/AC.28/2004/8).

44. Further action is needed to strengthen employment policy, adapt legislative systems and enforcement, create suitable working

*In **Belgium**, the Electronica project was launched in 2001 to promote women's employment in the new technologies sector. The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund in the context of a federal programme for 2000-2006. The longer-term goal of the project is to change mentalities among women, trainers, employers and other stakeholders.*

*In **Canada***



(up from 10.8 to 26.2 per cent), others experienced a decline, e.g. Lithuania (down from 17.5 to 10.6 per cent).

47. The Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands consistently had the best record (between 45 and 36 per cent). Austria, Germany, Iceland and Spain also scored well (over 30 per cent). In Belgium, women's share in the parliament increased from 12.7 to 35.3 per cent. At the lower end are countries, which scored below 10 per cent, including Turkey (4.4 per cent), Ukraine (5.3 per cent), Albania (5.7 per cent), Uzbekistan (7.2 per cent), and Serbia and Montenegro (7.9 per cent). Many countries scored around 10 per cent, such as the Russian Federation, Romania, Hungary and Kazakhstan. Women's share is around 12-14 per cent in France, Greece, Ireland and Italy.

48. A number of countries committed to achieving gender equality in government and public offices. In Ireland, the Government set a minimum target of 40 per cent for women's representation on State boards and the Netherlands has a target of 50 per cent by 2010. In many countries, however, current legislative systems do not require proportional representation of women and men among candidates nominated for elections. Quota systems introduced in several countries, such as Germany, Greece and Norway, have improved women's electoral chances.

49. Nevertheless in most countries urgent action is needed to achieve progress, especially in women's representation at the national decision-making level. This should include public awareness campaigns, the development of indicators to monitor and evaluate progress and innovative measures to encourage all stakeholders to ensure equal participation of women and men in political parties and elected bodies.

France has chosen to promote parity in elected bodies: the principle of equal access for women and men to elected mandates and elective functions was written into the Constitution in June 2000, and several laws have been adopted to give effect to that princi

51. Most countries in the UNECE region have national action plans and have ratified CEDAW. There has been progress in the legislative framework of countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which established national machineries in the late 1990s. However, these machineries are isolated from the government structure and decision-making processes and have few resources (see ECE/AC.28/2004/4 CRP. 4). Many other countries in the UNECE region, especially in CIS, have similar problems.

52. National mechanisms vary greatly in structure, resources and de facto impact on the advancement of women. Some are headed by ministers, as in France and Poland. Staff numbers vary from 1 person, in Georgia, to 220 in France.

53. Gender bureaux are located in different parts of government. They may be part of ministries of labour and social affairs, such as in Slovakia, or there may be widespread networks of regional offices, such as in Belgium, France or Spain. Their roles vary from acting as the main mechanism for securing equal rights and coordinating gender policies to drafting and developing government policies in collaboration with other ministries. In all countries these institutions work in three key areas: strengthening institutional support for gender equality, monitoring and enforcing implementation of commitments, and strengthening the synergy between institutional mechanisms and civil society.

54. In the past decade, links have tightened between national machineries and other stakeholders, such as line ministries, parliaments, research institutes, academia and the media. In all countries, ties with NGOs have strengthened. At the same time, NGOs took a lead in lobbying for better national mechanisms in many countries, especially new democracies, such as in Georgia.

55. Many countries improved tools for gender mainstreaming, including gender disaggregated data and analysis. This was achieved through cooperation with national statistical offices and better links with research institutes.

56. Despite these gains, many challenges remain. In particular, isolation and limited resources, including qualified staff weaken gender machineries. Many gaps still exist in tools and measures to promote the advancement of women relating to budgets, improvement in gender statistics as well as mechanisms for monitoring and benchmarking progress.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia set up a section on gender statistics within its State Institute for Statistics.

- *Challenges: Improving the de facto recognition and implementation of the principle of gender equality as a human right in some countries, partly because the importance of gender equality issues as human and democratic rights can be underestimated. Improving political and legal tools. Improving cooperation with NGOs that promote gender equality awareness and human rights of women.*

57. A majority of countries listed achievements in this area. There were legal changes throughout the UNECE region in regulations on human rights, particularly

from the media and advertising". They analyse stereotyping in the media and contain checklists and other

63. Among issues for further action are: combating ne